**Appendix A - Implementation Action Schedule**

The Implementation Action schedule details a set of actions that implement the goals and policies of the Citizen Participation Plan. These actions range in estimated time of completion from 6 months to 3 years. Some are ongoing; some are recommendations of items that may be too costly or difficult to implement in a short timeframe. The implementation actions were created from several Citizen Advisory Group meetings, questionnaires answered by both the Advisory Group and a collection of seventy at-large citizens over a three-month span in Fall 2009. The questionnaire and responses from the at-large citizens are attached to this plan as Appendix B.

The actions are derived from the Goals and Policies, but are not separated under each of the larger “Goals” due to significant crossover between the accomplishments of each action. The plan’s course of action did not involve a level of detail suited to acknowledging or predicting the precise costs of the actions below. Rather, the action schedule represents the staff and Advisory Group assumptions for a reasonable amount of time and resources required to apply these measures. For the sake of simplicity, they are organized in three main categories: high, medium and low priority; in addition, there are several ongoing actions that have no defined timetable.

In general, the high-priority actions are arranged by the ability to accomplish quickly and inexpensively, the so-called “low-hanging fruit.” They include a couple of items that are already in process or in the testing phase as a direct result of the development of this plan. The medium-priority actions are items that may take 6-12 months to fully develop or fund, with the thought that they would all be achieved and in place 18 months from adoption of the participation plan. The long-term actions are those that may have considerable monetary or other concerns, making them difficult to achieve in a relatively quick manner. This does not prevent these items from occurring faster than 36 months, but the scope of the items suggest that they may take the longest to employ.

Note: Appendix A represents solely the recommended actions from the group and do not constitute policy simply by the approval of this plan.

**High Priority/ Short Term Actions - To Be Established Within 6 Months**

1.) Establish a set of guidelines for departmental participation efforts
   - The Public Participation Guidelines will be a set of guidelines for City plans and initiatives ranging from budget presentations to master plan development to calling for Boards and Commissions volunteers. Would include methods and guidelines for marketing, public notices, meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc.
     - City employees would take advantage of this structure to get better and, potentially, more public input and assist in the completion of the desired public participation side of their planning efforts.
2.) Expand use of social networking sites or other new communication outlets
   - Use Facebook/Twitter, etc. and other new technology that instantly connects people, dispenses information and can be a valuable tool to reach citizens. Expand the existing efforts and link these sites with other City media outlets.
   - Train City staff to use Facebook and other social networking sites

3.) Expand two existing web pages:
   - participation.georgetown.org: central location for participation opportunities, sign-ups, meetings/agendas, forum for comment.
   - government.georgetown.org: all government business and links, calendar, agenda, council/boards, employee descriptions and information, participation, departments, etc.
   - increase “get involved” material on the website.

4.) Create an agendas/meetings email alert system for Council, Boards and Commissions
   - This would allow people to go in and sign up to receive alerts through email, or even texts and social networking posts, etc.
     - This concept would let people know immediately when meetings are scheduled, agendas are posted or even actions taken. They could choose which boards and commissions they were interested in and how to receive the information that they request.

5.) Explore new software to enable people to comment on agendas online
   - Explore ways to create individual comments or even public forums on specific agenda items or the agenda as a whole, as posted on the City website.
     - One issue that needs to be ironed out is to determine through the City’s Legal Department how to treat such comments in a public comment legal process (i.e., would they part of the official record?)
     - The other question is how to easily and efficiently convey such comments to the appropriate staff member, commissioner or councilmember.

**Medium Priority/ Mid Term Actions - To Be Established Within 18 months**

1.) Begin an annual “State of the City” meeting with City Manager or Mayor or Staff
   - This meeting could have a designated topic or be general in nature, for example: “Meet your local government” or “ways we can serve you better” or be something similar to the City Manager’s annual report to City Council. Could be topic specifically related to customer service/public access to the government.
   - Department Directors could also host smaller town meetings for specific neighborhoods or organizations or relevant topics of the day.
   - Also, consider inclusions from the Mayor or City Manager in e-newsletter(s) to update citizens on the issues of the City, opportunities to get involved in the future, news, etc. This could expand to include certain Directors (parks, development, etc.)
2.) Expand the City Reporter (monthly newsletter)
   - Increase the content of the newsletter to include more City news/departmental information, more marketing for communication efforts, etc. The newsletter could contain more info from various City departments, using the Communication Team as its primary source. This is the most direct way for the City to provide information to the most people (those who receive utility bills).
     o This has been considered previously and it increasingly appears that there is enough content available to justify an expansion.
     o Explore ways to deliver the City Reporter content via e-newsletters, email, or social networking sites. With new billing software, the City is expected to offer paperless bills soon, which means they will not get the City Reporter with a paper bill.

3.) Expand use of feedback boxes on website
   - Comments currently are included on news items, business listings, and city project pages. These comment boxes could be added to other pages.
   - A “How are we doing?” link or box on the website could be on departmental front pages or the main page that would allow people to use comment boxes, fill out a brief survey(s), or find contact information for specific staff or offices.
     o Staff would need to create specific guidelines for surveys, comments, and a system that would be able to easily distribute the input to the necessary department or employee.

4.) Expand Public Notice to provide more information and access to backup documents
   - Find new ways to provide public notice and convey information beyond those required by the State or other entity. Expand required public notice (physical, media, mailings, etc.) to include website links, maps and/or other necessary information, quick web references and dedicated pages with complete details on the project/meeting, new media locations for postings, etc.
     o This would need to be fine-tuned at the staff level on a departmental basis and, even then, as each case merits.

5.) Establish the Public Library as the primary physical location for City news/information
   - Utilize the Library as the location for postings, public notices, document availability, etc. to reach a different audience and serve as the place where people can be reminded of events, receive news, and share comments.
     o This would simply need to become the policy for City news and information. This would provide a central location for many people to receive the kind of information the City wants to present in an efficient manner. (See #11 also)
6.) Introduce Citizen Participation Element to Citizen’s Academy
   - A Citizen Participation presentation could be given by staff to close each Citizen’s Academy. This will educate the attendees on how they can get involved in areas of their interest. Encourage each department to include a tidbit regarding participation in their presentation.
   - Also, consider either an abbreviated or summarized Citizen’s Academy for people who cannot give 20+ hours of time towards the entire Academy program. This mini-session could be designed to target more of the public and try to whet their appetite for either the full Citizen’s Academy and/or other participation opportunities within the City. This will open up the business of City government to more people.
   - Another option is to open up certain sessions to anyone who wants to attend (with notice of course) without getting the graduation credit. The thought is that many people might like to go to certain sessions they are interested in, but not others. This would allow people to concentrate on their interests and get them in the door for later participation in a particular area.

7.) Web Streaming of Council/Public Meetings
   - Continue to explore streaming City Council meetings and other public/community events and meetings. This action is included in the IT Master Plan as a priority.
   - Also, work towards the live airing of City Council meetings on cable Channel 10
     - Hire video specialist and fund purchase of equipment to record and replay city council meetings on channel 10.
     - Once the City is recording meetings digitally and saving as digital files, look at options to stream video on the website and link to the online agenda.

8.) Expand content on Cable Channel 10 and City YouTube site
   - Expand the amount of content that is shown on Channel 10, both video and informational. Add more streaming audio and video content to City website and more photographs.
   - Increase content for the YouTube channel. Post web videos, promotional information, meetings, etc. Use to encourage participation, publish documentation, etc.

9.) Organize a centralized database for citizen contact information
   - This database would be an internal centralized location for citizen’s contact information that could be accessed by City employees interested in putting together working groups/task forces, etc. This would expand the pool of applicants for boards/commissions or other City working groups and provide instant connection to people when needed. It may contain the names and contact information of all citizens who attended meetings, spoke at hearings, etc. and update and confirm contact information once a year through a reconnection. This database would be used also for marketing the website and participation opportunities, potentially controlled by Communication Team members or individual departments.
     - Could be structured like the City of Austin where people or groups who sign up on the website personally enter their contact information.
Low Priority/ Long-Term Actions - To Be Established Within 36 Months

1.) Invest in a digital screen(s) for Library and City Hall for City information
   - This screen(s) would allow people to learn about news and information, maps and directions, City or community events, required agenda postings and also general information about board meetings, City Council, etc.
     - A large screen to display channel 10 or the City website would be simple. But a specially-programmed kiosk to display custom information would involve special software, hardware, and programming, and therefore is a more involved and expensive proposal.
     - The Library screen could be the more interactive screen and include more information. City Hall could have the simpler screen.

Ongoing/ Continuing Actions - To Begin Immediately, No Timetable for Completion

1.) Market the City of Georgetown website
   - Set standards to advertise the website on everything the City does. Establish the website as the place for all City information. Use marketing in publications that are not always obvious (example: traffic citations). Develop linkages to other City media sources so there is never content that is not connected back to the website.
     - Even if using traditional (or non-traditional) media sources for communication, tying it back to the website gets people focused on and familiar with the content. The goal is to reduce claims that people “didn’t know about it.”

2.) Strengthen communication with neighborhood/community organizations
   - A framework would be set up to easily connect with designated heads or other members of social, professional, neighborhood, church, etc. organizations through email or similar connection. Similar to the HOA/Neighborhood database connection system currently under development by the City. Names to be included on the mailing list will originate from public meetings and hearing sign-in sheets, written correspondence, recognized community organizations, as well as through individual requests.
     - This would allow the City to send out information, call for information, amplify public notice, encourage participation in projects, etc. This could be set up through the existing Neighborhood database, the Communication Team and an effort to find the players and establish the link. It could be used by each department.
     - Note: Extra care will be taken in the privacy of the names and contact information used for this database. It may be that the City formally asks each person prior to becoming part of the database.
   - Reach out to local youth organizations to encourage civic engagement and education regarding city government and the like. Encourage meeting attendance and public outreach through these organizations. Maybe begin a youth citizen’s academy.
• Work with public relations departments in other local government and quasi-governmental entities. Use communication with Williamson County, the Georgetown Independent School District, etc. to help spread information about the City.

3.) Reach out to Spanish-speaking community organizations and media
• Developing a better relationship with local media and organizations that cater to Spanish-speaking and other under-represented minority or second-language residents will help open up new opportunities for citizens that are not involved because of language or cultural barriers.
• Establish team of existing staff with Spanish translation ability to work on Spanish-language materials.
• Work at expanding Spanish translation of website/newsletters to email and start including directional information in Spanish for all public notices, so people can know who to contact or where to go to get more information. Also work on physical postings in locations that are used by these residents.

4.) Create greater integration between all marketing and communication tools
• This would be a simple way to link news stories/web posts/Reporter articles/Channel 10/YouTube/Facebook or Twitter posts /etc. for employees and communication staff to easily target all sources of information for their marketing, communication, and participation needs
  o The idea is to not have to create new content for all media sources but rather seamlessly cover all the ways people learn about the City in a simple fashion. This connection will expand beyond just news, but also information and video/audio content.

5.) Educate City administrative staff about new communication and participation tools
• Work with all Administrative staff, City Hall Administrative staff, City Secretary, City Manager, etc. to use and help the public on new systems put in place by this plan.
• Also, establish a consistent review regarding what information is often requested from the public, how such information can be more widely available, how the information can be identified and how to track requests for such information in the future.
  o This is an ongoing function for the website and other tools available to the City. As new tools are implemented based on this plan and other new techniques, helping City staff understand and communicate how people can become aware of what is available to them will be crucial.